



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

DEC 22 1997

Superintendent, Joshua Tree Park
74485 National Park Dr.
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

Dear Sir:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the **Joshua Tree National Park Backcountry and Wilderness Management Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)**. Our review is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

In the DEIS, the Park Service identifies four alternatives for managing the natural zone on former national monument land and all land added to the park in 1994 pursuant to the California Desert Protection Act. The DEIS alternatives outline a range of options for road and trail management, area closures, group size limits, roadside camping, rock climbing, artificial water sources, and desert tortoise recovery. Alternative A, referred to as the "proposed action," appears to be the Park Service's preferred alternative.

EPA commends the Park Service on the development of a proposed action which seeks to minimize resource impacts alternatives while providing a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities. We have no objections to the proposed plan, and have rated this DEIS LO (Lack of Objections) accordingly.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. If you have questions, please call Leonidas Payne of my staff at (415) 744-1571.

Sincerely,

David Farrel, Chief
Federal Activities Office

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Reading file

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